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SUBJECT: UN SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PEACEKEEPING CONCLUDES ANNUAL SESSION

REF: USUN 200

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The United Nations Special Committee for Peacekeeping Operations (C-34) concluded its annual session on March 20 by adopting a consensus report on schedule for the first time since 2006. The report contains specific language regarding the protection of civilians and broadly asks the Secretary-General to provide an assessment of related efforts to date. The report includes language generally supportive of recommendations to strengthen the capacity of the UN Police Division and the Standing Police Capacity, but proposed language suggesting that the UN Police Adviser be elevated to the Assistant Secretary General level was fiercely opposed by the Russian delegation. U.S. negotiators successfully countered attempts by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to include language that would have strengthened the role of the General Assembly at the expense of Security Council authority. END SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

¶2. (SBU) The UN Special Committee for Peacekeeping (C-34) reports to the UN General Assembly through the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (4th Committee). It operates by consensus. The C-34's annual substantive session produces a negotiated report which lays out overall principles for peacekeeping, gives the UN Secretariat guidance, and requests specific reports and actions over the course of the upcoming year. The Secretariat provides briefings on operational issues as needed during the year. In 2007 and 2008, the C-34 failed to reach consensus during the scheduled session, and negotiations lingered for over two months on both occasions over proposed report language on "consent of the parties" to peacekeeping operations and "protection of civilians" as a potential peacekeeping mandated task, respectively. This year's C-34 session opened with a general debate on February 23-24 (reftel) and concluded on March 20 with the adoption of the 2009 report of the working group.

UN POLICE

¶2. (SBU) The U.S., European Union (EU), and Canada/Australia/New Zealand (CANZ) pushed hard for

strong language calling for increased staffing for the UN Police Division and the Standing Policy Capacity, and strengthening the DPKO's ability to support UN policing in general. The NAM would only agree to weaker language that "acknowledges" rather than "welcomes" recommendations for strengthening police capacity. The NAM, knowing the issue was important to Western member states, primarily used the issue as a bargaining tool for other sections. Proposed language suggesting that the UN Police Adviser be elevated to the Assistant Secretary General (ASG) level, with a direct reporting channel to the Under Secretary General for Peacekeeping, was strongly opposed by the Russian delegation. The Russians viewed the language as an attempt to weaken the role of Rule of Law Assistant Secretary-General Dimitri Titov (the most senior Russian national in the Secretariat), who currently supervises the UN Police Division. The Fifth Committee (Budget) will consider specific proposals for additional positions and assets for the Police Division and Standing Police Capacity this spring, probably in May; the agreed C-34 text was strong enough not to have a negative impact on those discussions. (NOTE. The report states in paragraph 75, "The Committee acknowledges the gaps in the capacities of the Police Division, and stresses the importance of addressing them..." and in paragraph 78, "The Special Committee recognizes the need to recruit qualified personnel for police components of (UNPKOs)." END NOTE.)

PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS/DOCTRINE

¶3. (SBU) The 2009 report contains language asking the Secretariat to develop operational guidance for implementation of protection of civilians and other mandated tasks. In 2008, NAM concerns about "imposition of external values" and "infringement of sovereignty" manifested themselves in resistance to the inclusion of language calling for the Secretariat to develop guidance for the implementation of Security Council mandates of any kind but in particular with reference to the protection of civilians. As a result, consensus on the 2008 report was delayed for several months after the end of the substantive session, and in the end the report contained no reference at all to protection of civilians. Australia led efforts to revisit the question this year, strongly supported by Costa Rica, Uruguay and the EU. The U.S. played a supportive but low-key role, in order to avoid serving as a magnet for NAM objections. The U.S. intervened at one point in the negotiations to insist on elimination of a phrase that would have weakened the concept of protection of civilians. This year, the NAM ultimately proposed its own language, which was used as the basis for concluding negotiations. While the final language was not as strong as that originally proposed by the EU and CANZ, the report now has a separate section on the protection of civilians. (NOTE. the report states in paragraph 111, "The Special Committee requests the Secretary-General to provide for its consideration detailed information, based on lessons-learned, on the provision of resources, training, and concepts of operations in existing peacekeeping missions regarding the mandate of protection of civilians, and requests an assessment of their adequacy in effectively achieving all mandated tasks." END NOTE.)

PERSONNEL/CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

¶4. (SBU) The NAM pushed for language in the personnel section that The U.S> and others judged would have gone beyond current UN rules governing the appointment of staff by giving preference to candidates from troop-contributing countries (TCCs).

Regarding sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), USDel succeeded in the inclusion of language that gives a balanced analysis of SEA allegations, noting that while the overall number of allegations has continued to decline, the number of egregious allegations has not. The report also has strong language directing the UN to provide disaggregated data for all SEA offenses according to the type of serious misconduct alleged. Additionally, the report maintains language holding managers and commanders ultimately responsible for the conduct of subordinates.

STREAMLINING THE REPORT

¶5. (SBU) Delegations from the EU and CANZ made repeated, strong attempts to streamline the report and delete paragraphs carried over from previous years. As part of that effort, the EU recommended the deletion of the Guiding Principles section. Noting how the 2007 negotiations stalled for several months regarding a reference in the section to the "consent of parties" as a principle of peacekeeping operations, U.S. negotiators were able to convince the committee to leave the language untouched rather than risk opening this section and possibly much of the rest of the report to whole-scale redrafting by the NAM. However, several in the committee expressed a desire to delete the section in negotiations next year.
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